

Post-9/11 GI Bill Dept of Defense Update

The Defense Department announced June 23 its policy for transferring educational benefits to the spouses and children of service members under the "Post 9/11 GI Bill," which takes effect Aug. 1.

"This is as it should be in a volunteer force where families also serve," said Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy Bill Carr. "Transferability of GI Bill benefits is the most requested initiative we receive from our service members, and we believe it will assist us in retaining highly qualified military personnel."

Career service members on active duty or in the selected Reserve on Aug. 1, and who are eligible for the "Post 9/11 GI Bill," may be entitled to transfer all or a portion of their education entitlement to one or more family members. To be eligible, service members must have served in the Armed Forces for at least six years, and agree to serve four additional years, from the date of election to transfer.

Service members with at least 10 years of service, who by DoD or service policy are prevented from committing to four additional years, may transfer their benefits provided they commit for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute.

Additionally, to maintain proper force structure and promotion opportunities, temporary rules have been developed for service members eligible to retire between Aug. 1, 2009 and Aug. 1, 2012. Depending on their retirement eligibility date, these service members will commit to one to three additional years, from the date of election to transfer.

The services will provide further implementation guidance. Beginning June 29, eligible service members may make transfer designations by visiting www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/. The full transferability policy is available here.

Service members may be eligible for the "Post 9/11 GI Bill" if they served at least 90 aggregate days on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, and were honorably discharged. Based on the length of active duty service, members are entitled to a percentage of the cost of tuition and fees, not to exceed the most expensive in-state undergraduate tuition at a public institution of higher learning. Members not on active duty may also receive a monthly living stipend equal to the basic allowance for housing payable to a military E-5 with dependents, and to an annual \$1,000 stipend for books and supplies.

The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the "Post 9/11 GI Bill," and determines eligibility for education benefits. Further information on eligibility, benefit levels, and application procedures can be found at www.gibill.va.gov.